

THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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William D. Dearnaley, News Director
Janet E. Vetter, Deputy News Director

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CONFERENCE STUDIES ACTIVEMINISTRY IN OLD AGE

DPS 88041

by K. Johnson Ingram

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. (DPS, March 10) -- "No less than a whole life," said psychoanalyst Erik Erikson as he opened an Episcopal conference on active ministry in old age. "No less than a whole life, and not less than a whole communal setting."

Twenty-six Episcopalians met here earlier this year in the monastery of the Society of St. John the Evangelist to investigate ways to develop faith communities in which older persons are honored for their wisdom and given opportunities for vital ministry. The conference was sponsored by the Taucross Farm Foundation of Scio, Ore., assisted and funded by a grant from the Roanridge/Cochel Trust. Led by Erikson and his wife and research and writing partner, Joan, participants examined the spiritual, emotional, physical, and social factors necessary to create an atmosphere of ministry enablement.

"In every life, involvement with a community is important," the Eriksons insist, as they explore the human life cycles in their psychosocial development. "Community is the catalyst. Our interaction with our community determines whether we begin life in trust or suspicion, and whether it ends with integrity or despair." The Eriksons are the authors of many books, including Vital Involvement In Old Age (with Helen Kivnick), published in 1986 by W.W. Norton.

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DPS 88041/2

Lorraine Chiaventone, executive director of the Episcopal Society for Ministry on Aging, agrees with the need for involvement. "We dare not continue to waste an important resource by shelving the elderly," she says passionately. Through the shared efforts of the society, the Board of Homeland Ministries of the United Church of Christ, and the Presbyterian Office on Aging, Chiaventone has helped to develop a new book titled Older Adult Ministry.

Conference participants agreed that ministry by older persons must full a real need. "In-utility is the tragedy of aging," said the Rev. Edward Sims, consultant to the Church Pension Fund. "The single overriding drive of all organisms is to be useful. That's the motivation that dominates both reproduction and survival."

Participants in the conference stressed that society should utilize the skills and experience that older people possess, rather than creating "crafts and busy work." They pointed to the important "over-eighty" ministries of the Eriksons and of the Rev. Bernadette Turner, who was ordained to the diaconate at age 82 and is currently employed full-time as the chaplain of the large retirement hotel where she lives. Turner holds a Ph.D., is a psychiatric social worker, and, before ordination, had a varied career as a college professor, spiritual counselor, and author of two books on the importance of prayer in daily life.

"There's an entertainment overkill in retirement homes," Turner told the conference. "While they knock themselves out creating hotel-style amenities, greater choices of food, and many recreation programs, they are wasting the wisdom and energy of the residents, who have a great deal to offer each other and society."

Bernard Nash, originator and director of the Foster Grandparents Program for the old Department of Health, Education and Welfare, former executive director of American Association of Retired Persons, author of numerous articles on aging and community development, and currently assistant manager of Worker Equity at AARP, calls on the Church:

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"Faith communities need to create pre-retirement education programs, develop support systems for those who lose spouses, friends and colleagues, call upon the experience and insights that older people can bring to ministry, and help them to explore and develop their spirituality," he said.

Former seminary professor Emma Lou Benignus told the conference, "I welcomed the Transcendent, and it came," as the discussion moved deeper into the examination of the spiritual life of older people. "It was the touchstone of my ministry." Benignus, who was a professor at the Episcopal Theological school here, later moved to teach at the Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation. Until recently, she worked in the American Baptist Aging Program, exploring creative options for older persons. "I had two major tasks in this job. One was to find housing alternatives for the elderly and the other was to help people understand God's action in their own aging process. The Scriptures were my major resource." Though retirement age herself, Benignus is actively involved in ministry in her own diocese and throughout the nation.

To promote active ministry in old age, two conference participants recently created and taught a course titled "Developing Ministries To and With Older Adults" at the Church Divinity School of the Pacific. Alice Scannell, chairwoman of the Senior Adult Ministries Commission of the Diocese of Oregon, and Lynn Huber, director of Affirmative Aging for the Diocese of Tennessee, will repeat the course at the seminary of the University of the South this summer and possibly at other seminaries in the coming year.

"It has to happen in the Church, in parishes and in dioceses," Huber stated. "That's where ministry has to be enabled as well as where it is practiced."

"The elderly are 'grandparents' to society," said Joan Erikson at the close of the conference, "fully sharing responsibility with the generations, whole and in community."

"In community with God," added her psychoanalyst husband.

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EPISCOPAL CHURCH WOMEN

PREVIEW SUMMER MEETING

DPS 88042

NEW YORK (DPS, March 10) -- The Episcopal church Women have announced plans for the 39th Triennial meeting of the Women of the Church, scheduled to begin at 2 P.M. July 1, in Cobo Hall, Detroit. The meeting, which has as its theme "Behold! New Life, New Vision," begins the day before the gavel falls for the opening session of General Convention, which will also be meeting in Cobo Hall.

Marcy S. Walsh, president of the Episcopal Church Women, has announced the two keynote speakers for the Triennial Meeting. On July 4, the speaker will be the Rt. Rev. Bennett J. Simms, retired bishop of Atlanta, who is now director of the Institute of Servant Leadership. On July 6, the speaker will be Doris Salah of Jerusalem, a Palestinian Christian, who since 1967 has been director of the YWCA. Her work is focused, primarily, on a ministry to the women and children of the Palestinian refugee camps.

The spiritual guide for the Triennial Meeting, the person responsible for drawing together the threads of each day's worship and program, will be the Very Rev. Geralyn Wolf, dean of Christ Cathedral, Louisville, Ky.

The Triennial Meeting will, once again, offer the popular "Lunch with..." lecture series on July 4-7. Reservations will be required for the four events, which will take place at the Top of Ponchatrain Hotel, across the street from Cobo Hall. For reservation information contact: Charlotte Green, 4 W. LaMesa, Stockton, Calif., 95207. On July 4, the featured speaker will be Byron Rushing, a member of the Massachusetts House of Representatives and convention Deputy from the Diocese of Massachusetts.

There will be a musical event on Wednesday, July 6, featuring a popular Detroit group known as "The Grunyons". And on Thursday, July 7, the speaker will be Mary Sudman Donovan, author of A Different Call - Women's Ministries in the Episcopal Church 1850-1920 and a lecturer in history at the University of Arkansas. Donovan was co-initiator of the Episcopal Women's History Project.

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DPS 88043/2

Worship services for the Triennial Meeting will begin every morning at 9. Rosemary Crowe from Ashville, N.C., and "The Fisherfold", a well-known singing group, will provide some of the music. A troupe of young clowns from Gethsemane Cathedral in Fargo, N. Dak., with a children's hospital ministry, will lead the worship on July 4. Rae Whitney of Scottsbluff, Nev., has written a litany and hymn that will be used in one of the worship services. The final service of the Meeting, a Commissioning Eucharist on Saturday, July 9, will be celebrated by Presiding Bishop Edmond L. Browning. In early May, delegates to the meeting will receive a devotional guide with 50 meditations written by women from around the Church. This guide is intended as a preparation for the meeting.

Walsh will preside over business sessions that will elect new national officers for the Triennium, vote on proposed by-law changes, and provide hearings for ECW business that comes to the floor. On Wednesday, July 6, there will be a forum focusing on three specific areas of concern to women in the Church: sexuality, justice, and "Living in the New Age".

The ECW estimates that some 420 delegates, representing 110 dioceses and women's organizations, will register. In addition to the other events, delegates will be offered, in a period of three days, 45 workshops on a wide variety of concerns. There will also be an ecumenical panel of women representing several denominations of Church Women United.

United Thank Offering Grant Day, an important feature of this Triennial Meeting, will be celebrated on July 7. In addition to voting on grant recipients for 1988, the day will kick-off the centennial celebration of the UTO. There will also be a benefit performance of "Quilters". This critically acclaimed play is about the nation's unsung pioneers - the women.

The performance will be held in Ford Auditorium. There will be a visitor's gallery for all Convention delegates and visitors who would like to share in the events of the Triennial Meeting.

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URBAN CAUCUS HOLDS

EIGHTH ASSEMBLY

DPS 88043

WASHINGTON (DPS, March 10) ---"Lifting up the City" was the theme of the 8th Annual Episcopal Urban Caucus National Assembly, held here late last month. Over 120 urban ministers from around the country gathered for the conference, which provided the opportunity to hear nationally-known speakers, lobby congress people, attend workshops, and develop strategies for representing the mission of the urban churches at the upcoming General Convention.

Welcoming Assembly participants to Washington were the mayor of the city, Marion Barry, and the Diocese of Washington's bishop, the Rt. Rev. John Walker. The nationally syndicated columnist Nancy Amidei made the keynote address, proclaiming that there is a renewed vigor and commitment to seek justice and compassion in the country today. Encouraging the Assembly to make their issues known to the Washington political establishment, Amidei claimed that this renewed energy toward issues of justice and peace accounts for the increased emphasis on compassion in this year's presidential election.

As the Assembly continued, participants had the opportunity to hear from numerous individuals involved in the policy process. Charging members to get involved with that process, they assured the Urban Caucus that their views would make a difference. The highlight of these presentations was a briefing by IMPACT, a national lobbying organization created by various denominations concerned with issues of social justice. Assembly participants went to lobby their own legislators following the presentation.

Workshops offered at the Assembly included "Pastoral Care of the Urban Aging," "Housing," "Grass Roots Organizing," "AIDS Ministries in the City," and "Economic Justice: a Review of the Urban Bishop's Letter on Economic Justice". In addition, a special presentation was made which highlighted various urban ministries here.

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DPS 88043/2

Another important aspect of the Assembly was the daily liturgy. Of special significance was a Eucharist celebrated in honor of two founding members of the Episcopal Urban Caucus who died recently: John Coleman and Jan Pierce. The national cathedral served as host to the final Eucharistic celebration, where the Hon. Byron Rushing, a state legislator from Massachusetts and former president of the Caucus, preached. Rushing challenged the Assembly to understand that as baptized Christians we are all saints of God, and that our mandate is to seek Christ in and through others as we seek justice and peace. Walker was celebrant of the Cathedral Eucharist.

The Assembly concluded on Saturday morning with elections to the board and the passing of resolutions to be brought to General Convention. Next year's Assembly is being planned for Seattle, Wash.

For more information about the Episcopal Urban Caucus, write to Anrmarie Marvel, Episcopal Urban Caucus, 1 Joy Street, Boston, MA. 02108.

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AFP LAUNCHES 30TH

ANNUAL MEETING

DPS 88044

WINTER PARK, Fla. (DPS, March 10) -- Prayer releases God's mighty power. That is what the Anglican Fellowship of Prayer believes, and that is the theme of its 30th Annual International Prayer Conference. The event will be held at the Queen Elizabeth Hotel in Montreal May 19-21.

The Fellowship is the primary prayer organization in the Anglican Communion, and holds its annual conferences in various locations in the United States and Canada. The conference is open to all who want to learn more about prayer.

Conference leader will be the Rt. Rev. Patrick Harris, who has keynoted the last two National Episcopal Conferences on Renewal, Evangelism and Ministry sponsored by PEWSACTION. The former bishop of Northern Argentina, Harris is now executive secretary of the Partnership for World Mission in London. His three addresses will be centered around the priority of prayer and the power of prayer.

Bible study leader for the Conference will be the Rt. Rev. John Sperry, bishop of the Arctic. He is the missionary bishop of the largest diocese (geographically) in the Anglican Communion. Sperry is considered one of the finest Bible teachers of our day.

The Most Rev. Michael Peers, Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, will be the banquet speaker. There will also be other key speakers; a total of 27 different field trips, seminars, and workshops to choose from; worship in Christ Church Cathedral; a healing service in historic St. George's Church; and a children's program.

For further information, contact the Anglican Fellowship of Prayer, P.O. Box M, Winter Park, Fla. 32790. Tele: (305) 628-4330.

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PRIEST IS M.E.

AT EPISCOPALIAN

DPS 88045

PHILADELPHIA (DPS, March 10) --- Richard H. Schmidt, priest and journalist, has been appointed managing editor of The Episcopalian, Richard L. Crawford, publisher, has announced.

Schmidt, 43, has resigned as rector of St. Peter's Church, Ladue, Mo., to take up his new duties at the Philadelphia-based publication.

"Dick Schmidt comes to The Episcopalian with years of experience in writing and editing and with a good knowledge of graphics," Crawford said. "Dick is no stranger to the readers of The Episcopalian. He has written for this publication many times and for a number of years he has been one of the editors of the Professional Pages which is circulated among the clergy," he said. "We welcome him to the staff, knowing that along with his wide experience as a journalist and pastor, he brings new ideas."

Schmidt and his wife, Pamela, are the parents of three sons. He has served as rector of St. Peter's Church since 1982. He previously was rector of St. John's church, Charleston, W. Va., and St. Stephen's, Romeny, W. Va. While in the Diocese of West Virginia, Schmidt was editor of the diocesan newspaper, The Mountain Dayspring. He was writer for the Convention Daily during the General Convention in 1982 and 1985. He is an award-winning journalist, whose credits include researching and writing a Bible study curriculum for the Diocese of West Virginia.

A native of Louisville, Ky., Schmidt was ordained priest in 1970. He is a graduate of Kenyon College and the Vanderbilt Divinity School. He has done further graduate work at the University of the South, West Virginia College of Graduate Studies, the Virginia Theological Seminary, and the Cantress Summer School, Canterbury, England.

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'CHRIS' COWAP, 52,

DIES OF CANCER

DPS 88046

NEW YORK, (DPS, March 10) --Carolyn A. (Chris) Cowap, National Council of Churches director of human and environmental health, died at her home here in February after a long battle with cancer. She was 52.

An Episcopal laywoman, Cowap joined the staff of the NCC Division of Church and Society (DCS) in May 1974 as a staff associate for action/education. During her 14 years with the division, she staffed many issues for the NCC including energy, development education, the J.P. Stevens boycott, the Equal Rights Amendment, and the infiltration of the women's movement by the FBI.

In her most recent post, she had a primary responsibility for environmental, health, and welfare issues within an overall context of economic justice. A major focus of her work was "eco-justice," the arena where ecological problems appear to be in conflict with economic justice. The Eco-Justice Working Group, which she staffed, deals with clean air, acid rain, energy, and toxic substances.

In July 1984, at the request of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, Cowap convened ecumenical participants to testify at a hearing on the U.S. Roman Catholic bishops' pastoral letter on the U.S. economy, then in preparation, and prepared ecumenical testimony for the hearing.

Cowap also staffed the DCS Health and Welfare Working Group, enabling ecumenical work on such issues as unemployment, the AIDS crisis, national health policy, Aid for Families with Dependent Children, and other assistance programs.

She worked with the Women's Caucus of the NCC Governing Board from the beginning of her employment at the Council, and together they developed the Justice for Women staff position in DCS. When that position was temporarily eliminated in June 1986, Cowap again assumed administrative and financial management responsibility for that portion of DCS's work, including staffing the Justice for Women Working Group and the Women's Caucus.

DPS 88046/2

Cowap was born in England on Dec. 20, 1935, and received her early education there. She earned her bachelor of arts degree in English from Smith College, Northampton, Mass. She also studied at the New England Conservatory of Music, Boston, where she was an opera voice major, and did post-graduate work at New York University and Boston University.

Following graduation, Cowap taught for five years at the Brearly School and for two years at St. Hilda's and St. Hugh's School, both in New York City. For four years she lived in Somerset, England, writing television and play scripts. In addition, she was active as volunteer in a number of organizations, particularly in several devoted to ending the Indochinese war. During this period she was a member of the Parish Council (vestry) of St. John's Church, Axbridge.

From 1969-71, Cowap worked as groups advisory secretary for Christian Aid, the section of the British Council of Churches responsible for overseas relief and development projects. She was responsible for working with groups of people in Britain who wished to educate their communities about the need for development. She attended the Society for International Development in Delhi in 1969 representing Christian Aid and as a result wrote the booklet "Now I See."

She was a consultant on development education and acting director of citizen action for Church Women United from 1971-72, helping CWU units understand the problems of world poverty and injustice and to define "development," and dealing with issues of farmworkers and of concerns surfacing at the end of the Vietnam war. In 1973-74, she served as a consultant on development education with the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries.

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PICTURE CAPTION

HONDURAS OPENS GIRLS' HOME

(DPS 88047) -- Bishop Leo Frade of Honduras officially opened the girls orphanage in San Pedro Sula, Honduras, with a house blessing and celebration of the Eucharist. The home was named Nuestras Pequenas Rosas in memory of Rosa Cisheros, a prominent lay person in the Diocese of El Salvador what was murdered at the onset of the civil strife in that country. Members of the Executive Council and the Church Center staff along with local clergy, lay persons, and community leaders were present at the inauguration. The home, under the direction of John Elledge III, already has four young girls. At present the home has the capacity for housing, educating, and training 25 girls. This program is the direct result of a resolution passed at the 1985 diocesan convention in Honduras to study the urgent need for a home for abandoned and abused girls as a complement to the very successful boy's orphanage, The Home of Love and Hope, located in Tegucigalpa. The funds to start the program have come through contributions of several local ECW's in the United States. Funds are being sought for support of these girls. Inquiries and support to The Episcopal Diocese of Honduras, Apartado 1738, San Pedro Sula, Honduras.

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